



Fact Sheet

Proposed NEPA Procedure Updates

Background

Environmental stewardship remains one of TVA's core missions. One of the guiding regulations supporting this mission is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The act requires federal agencies to consider and disclose environmental consequences of major actions. NEPA encourages public involvement during assessments of environmental impact.

TVA is currently proposing an update to its existing NEPA implementing procedures to streamline for greater effectiveness, to better align with decision-making processes, ensure environmental compliance and incorporate guidance from the Council on Environmental Quality. Public comment remains open through September 6, 2017.

Key Facts

- TVA's NEPA procedures were last updated in the early 1980s.
- Under the proposed updates, much of TVA's NEPA procedure for environmental reviews will remain unchanged.
 - An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will normally be prepared for major projects or any action where environmental impacts are expected to be significant or highly controversial.
 - An Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared for any proposed action where environmental impacts are uncertain or a categorical exclusion doesn't apply.
 - TVA will continue to engage the public during EISs and EAs through public meetings, web postings and social media, as appropriate
- A categorical exclusion (CE) may be granted for small or repetitive tasks that have little to no potential to affect the environment.
 - CEs reduce paperwork and delays while allowing focus to be properly placed on major actions with a greater potential to affect the environment.
 - For actions believed to qualify for a CE, TVA specialists often complete a 60-question checklist, which may involve field studies and expert analysis.
 - Actions that qualify for a CE must still comply with other federal and state laws.
 - Proposed CE actions that are found to potentially have a greater environmental impact must go through an EA or EIS.
 - The revised TVA NEPA procedure increases the number of CEs from 28 to 50 by including such common activities as habitat improvements, trail maintenance, wetland restoration, routine facility maintenance and some smaller infrastructure upgrades.
 - Supporting documentation on TVA's website describes the factors TVA considered when proposing new and revised CEs for actions with little or no potential for significant environmental impacts.
- TVA is seeking public comment on its draft NEPA procedure as announced on TVA's website and in a Federal Register notice published on June 8, 2017.
- At the request of interested parties, TVA voluntarily extended the public comment period by 30 days until September 6, 2017.
- No final decision on the proposed NEPA procedures has been made and constructive, thoughtful public feedback helps us further refine our processes.